

1703(c), and section 505(c) of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, 22 U.S.C. 2349aa-9(c), I am transmitting a 6-month periodic report prepared by my Administration on the national emergency with respect to Iran

that was declared in Executive Order 12957 of March 15, 1995.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
March 12, 2003.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 13.

Remarks at a Saint Patrick's Day Shamrock Presentation Ceremony With Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland *March 13, 2003*

Thank you very much, Taoiseach, and welcome back to the White House. Laura and I are honored you came and really glad you're here.

On behalf of the American people, I thank you for the bowl of shamrocks and the good fortune they promise. This annual gift symbolizes the deep and enduring friendship between our two countries. The strong ties between Ireland and the United States reach back centuries.

These strong ties have been affirmed at critical moments in our country's history. It is said that during the Revolutionary War, an Irish American woman, Lydia Darragh, provided valuable intelligence to George Washington's troops, helping prevent a planned British offensive. During the Civil War, the famed Irish Brigade fought valiantly on the Union side in terrible battles, some not far from where we stand.

And throughout America's history, we have benefited from the industry and the talents and the ideals of millions of Ireland's sons and daughters. Today, our two countries share a deep commitment to building a world of peace and security and prosperity and freedom. We've stood together in Afghanistan, in Kosovo, in Bosnia, and beyond, to stop aggression and to alleviate suffering. Ireland is a valued mem-

ber of the coalition against global terror. And we thank you, sir.

The American people appreciate Ireland's work on U.N. Security Council to help secure passage of the Resolution 1441. That resolution demanded that Iraq disarm itself of all weapons of mass destruction. We appreciate Ireland's support for ensuring that the just demands of the world are enforced. The responsibilities of freedom are not always easy to bear, but Ireland and America are joined by a common commitment to freedom's defense against tyranny and terror.

Our two countries also stand together in another cause, working to achieve lasting peace in Northern Ireland. Recent years have seen historic progress thanks to the tireless efforts of Prime Minister Ahern and Blair and many other people who long for peace. Now all parties can and must build on this progress so that the people of Northern Ireland can replace old resentments with new cooperation and new hope. America has long supported this vital work, and today that support endures and continues. We will help where we can.

Saint Patrick's Day reminds us of the close ties of family and friendship between our countries, but everyday—every day of the year, America is proud to call Ireland a friend.

Taoiseach, may good fortune be yours, may your joys never end, may good luck be with you wherever you go, and your blessings outnumber the shamrocks that grow. Welcome.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:38 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland, who presented the shamrocks; and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

Statement on Senate Action on Legislation To Ban Partial-Birth Abortion *March 13, 2003*

Partial-birth abortion is an abhorrent procedure that offends human dignity, and I commend the Senate for passing legislation to ban it. Today's action is an important step toward building a culture of life in

America. I look forward to the House passing legislation and working with the Senate to resolve any differences so that I can sign legislation banning partial-birth abortion into law.

Statement on Senate Action To Block a Vote on the Nomination of Miguel Estrada To Be a United States Circuit Judge *March 13, 2003*

Today, 42 Senate Democrats have decided to continue their filibuster to block a vote on the nomination of Miguel Estrada. The Senate has a constitutional responsibility to hold an up-or-down vote on all judicial nominees within a reasonable time, but some Senate Democrats have abandoned that responsibility in favor of partisan obstructionist tactics. The judicial confirmation process is broken, and the consequences for the American people are real. Because of the Senate's failure to hold timely votes, the number of judicial vacancies has become unacceptably high. When the Federal courts are understaffed, they

cannot act in a timely manner to resolve disputes that affect the lives and liberties of all Americans.

In order to protect the rights of Americans and the sanctity of the Constitution, this obstruction must end. Miguel Estrada was nominated nearly 2 years ago, yet he still has not received a fair vote. I call on the Senate to end the delays, stop holding Miguel Estrada to a double standard, and live up to its responsibility to hold an up-or-down vote on this highly qualified nominee. As I said before, let each Senator vote as he or she thinks best, but give the man a vote.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Health Care Legislation *March 13, 2003*

America's medical liability system is badly broken. Frivolous and abusive law-

suits are driving up costs for patients, threatening access to quality health care,